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Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #6

12 Oct 2023

KEY POINTS

- Israeli bombardments from the air, sea, and land have continued and intensified across the Gaza Strip for the sixth consecutive day. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, between 18:30 yesterday and 14:00 today, 317 Palestinians were killed and 929 others injured. In total, 1,417 have been killed and 6,268 injured in Gaza since 7 October. Human rights organizations have expressed concerns about incidents where civilians and civilian objects appear to have been directly targeted by Israeli airstrikes

- Palestinian armed groups in Gaza continued their indiscriminate rocket firing towards Israeli population centres, albeit with lesser intensity than in previous days. As a result, since yesterday noon, two people were killed in the southern Israel and several others were severely injured. According to Israeli official sources, at least 1,300 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed in Israel since 7 October and at least 3,391 have been injured, the vast majority during the initial attack carried out by Palestinian armed groups

- Mass displacement continues. In the Gaza Strip, the cumulative number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) increased by 25 percent over the past 24 hours, now exceeding 423,000 of whom over two thirds are taking shelter in UNRWA schools.

- Mass displacement in southern Israel has primarily occurred in the immediate vicinity to Gaza, where dozens of small communities have been fully evacuated. The Israeli authorities have been responding to the needs of these IDPs (this Flash Update focuses on the humanitarian needs in Gaza and the West Bank).

- Since yesterday at 14:00 Gaza has been undergoing a full electricity blackout, which has brought essential health, water and sanitation services to the brink of collapse, and exacerbated food insecurity. This followed Israel's halt of its electricity and fuel supply to Gaza on 8 October, which in turn triggered the shutdown of Gaza's sole power plant yesterday, after it depleted its fuel reserves. Secretary-General António Guterres stressed yesterday that "crucial life-saving supplies, including fuel, food and water, must be allowed into Gaza"

- Between 100 and 150 Israelis, including soldiers and civilians, some of whom are women and children, as well as some foreign nationals, have been captured and forcibly taken into Gaza. The Secretary-General called yesterday for the "immediate release of all Israeli hostages". Hostage-taking is forbidden under International Humanitarian Law.

- Settler attacks, alongside confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli forces, continued across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, resulting in the killing of eight Palestinians, including two children, since yesterday noon

PALESTINIAN CASUALTIES

Gaza*

1,417 Fatalities

6,268 Injuries

*According to the MoH in Gaza

West Bank

33 Fatalities

500 Injuries

ISRAELI CASUALTIES**

1,300 Fatalities

3,391 Injuries

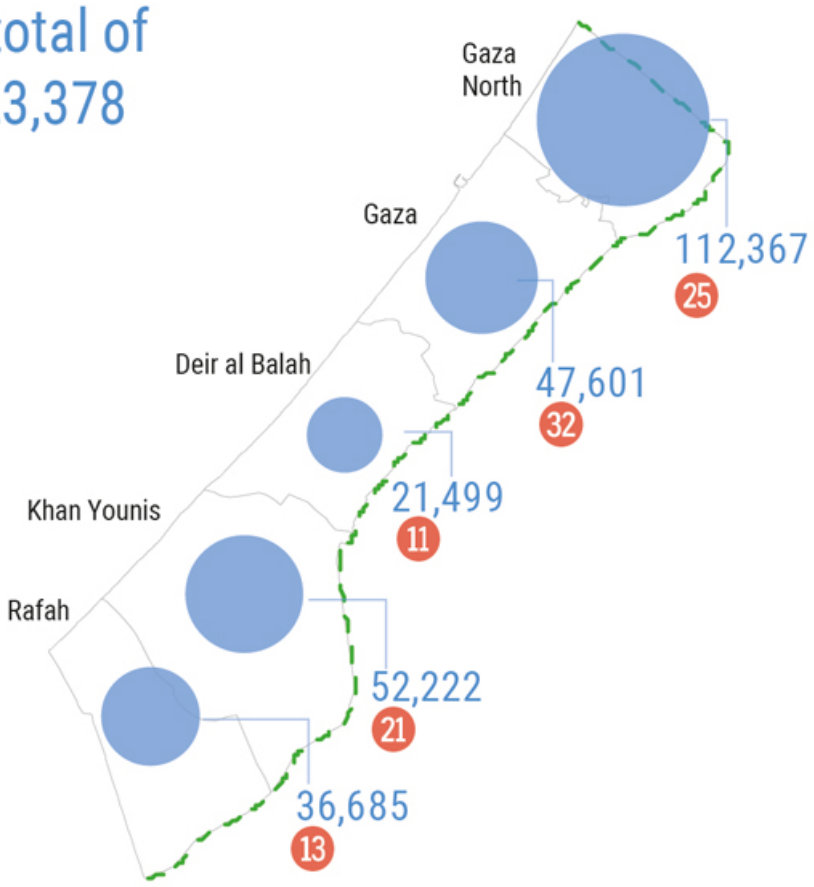
**According to Israeli official sources

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE BY GOVERNORATE LOCATED IN UNRWA SCHOOLS / SHELTERS

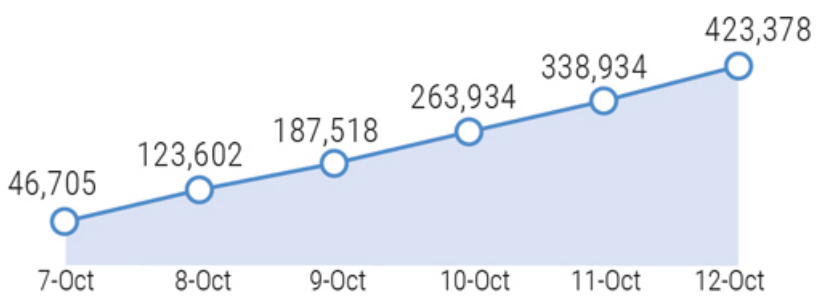
as of 16:00, 12 October 2023

270,374
IDPs out of a total of 423,378

102
Total Schools



INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE



GAZA HUMANITARIAN OVERVIEW

Hostilities and casualties

Heavy Israeli bombardments, from the air, sea and land, have continued almost uninterrupted. Multiple residential buildings in densely populated areas have been targeted and destroyed during the past 24 hours. The most severely hit areas were Al Maqousi and Al Mashtal areas in the northern part of Gaza City, the central and southern areas of Rafah, and Al Nusirat and Deir Al Balah in the central area of Gaza. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, between 18:30 yesterday and 14:00 today, 317 Palestinians were killed, and 929 others injured. Among these casualties are 16 families who had had most of their members killed in a single incident, bringing the total number of such families since the start of the hostilities to 44

Many casualties are still trapped beneath the rubble, with Civil Defense and medical teams unable to access the area due to protection concerns, equipment shortages and severely damaged streets.

Additionally, Israeli media sources reported that the bodies of over 1,000 members of Palestinian armed groups killed in Israel, mostly on 7 and 8 October, are being held by the Israeli authorities

According to Israeli military sources, occasional clashes between Israeli forces and members of Palestinian armed groups that remained in southern Israel since the initial attack on 7 October continued, with at least five Palestinians killed since yesterday noon.

According to the Gaza Ministry of Public Works, 752 residential and non-residential buildings, comprising 2,835 housing units have been destroyed. Another 1,791 housing units have been damaged beyond repair and rendered uninhabitable

Additional buildings struck and damaged include at least 90 education facilities, including 20 UNRWA schools, two of which were used as emergency shelters for IDPs, and 70 Palestinian Authority (PA) schools, one of which was destroyed. Eleven mosques were targeted and destroyed, while seven churches and mosques sustained damage.

Water and sanitation facilities have been also hit. Since the start of hostilities, six water wells, three water pumping stations, one water reservoir, and one desalination plant serving over 1,100,000 people were damaged by airstrikes

Displacement

As of 23:00 today, the number of IDPs has risen by an additional 84,444 people and reached 423,378, with UNRWA hosting around 64 per cent of them in 102 premises operated as designated emergency shelters. Additionally, 26,984 IDPs have taken refuge at 29 PA schools. It is estimated that over 153,000 IDPs, whose homes have been destroyed or damaged, or have left their homes due to fear, are with relatives and neighbours, as well as in other public facilities. About 3,000 Palestinians in Gaza remain displaced due to previous escalations.

Part of IDPs have left their homes following evacuation warnings issued by the Israeli military between 8 and 12 October concerning ten specific areas across Gaza. According to these warnings, residents must relocate to the center of nearby cities or shelters to avoid risking their lives.

Basic services and livelihoods

Since yesterday at 14:00 Gaza has been undergoing a full electricity blackout, following Israel's halt of its electricity and fuel supply to Gaza on 8 October, which in turn triggered the shutdown of Gaza's sole power plant yesterday, after it depleted its fuel reserves. According to GPP officials, the Israeli authorities have warned them that the plant would be targeted if it attempts to resume operations. The Israeli Defense Minister indicated that electricity, fuel and water supply to Gaza will not be restored until the Israeli hostages are released.

Essential service infrastructure is currently operational via backup generators, which rely on fuel reserves that are being rapidly depleted. Four out of five of the Gaza wastewater treatment plants have shut down due to lack of power. Additionally, 53 out of 65 sewage pumping stations are not functional, increasing the risk sewage flooding. In some areas, sewage and solid waste are now accumulating in the streets, posing health and environmental hazards

All the three seawater desalination plants, which had previously produced 21 million liters of drinking water per day have halted operations completely. Drinking water supply from Israel was also cut since the evening of 9 October, causing a severe shortage of drinking water for over 650,000 people. The WASH cluster estimates that half of the Gaza Strip's population have had no tap water supply since yesterday, due to the closure of the last pumping station. The municipalities of the Gaza Strip are urging residents to reduce water consumption.

Lack of electricity has also had a detrimental effect on food security. It disrupted refrigeration, irrigation, and incubation devices, severely impacting agricultural livelihoods (poultry, cattle, fish, and other products). Poultry farms have been also devastated due to restricted access to fodder. Prices of fresh vegetables have soared due to limited supplies. Meanwhile, half of the bakeries have less than a week's supply of wheat flour, and several anticipate they will be unable to continue producing fresh bread due to their depleted wheat flour stock.

Although all 13 hospitals in the Gaza Strip are partially operational and continue providing treatment for injuries, they rely on backup generators, with fuel reserves running dangerously low, and while facing severe shortages of medical supplies and damage from airstrikes. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said that the power shortages at hospitals put newborns in incubators and elderly patients on oxygen at risk; kidney dialysis stops, and X-rays can't be taken. Therefore, the ICRC indicates "without electricity, hospitals risk turning into morgues."

Movement and access

Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings remain closed due to the hostilities. Referral of patients and their companions from the Gaza Strip to reach scheduled medical appointments in the West Bank and Israel have totally stopped since 7 October. More than 1,000 Gazan workers were stuck inside Israel and transferred to the West Bank recently.

The Rafah crossing with Egypt, has remained closed for the movement of people and goods for the third consecutive day. On 09 and 10 October, Israeli forces carried out a number of air strikes near the Palestinian side of the Rafah crossing resulting in its closure. Egypt issued a statement today clarified that since the start of the escalation Egypt did not closed Rafah crossing.

Access to the sea has been prohibited and all fishing activity has stopped since the start of the hostilities. Access within 1,000 meters from Israel's perimeter fence remained prohibited impacting Palestinian famers' access to large areas of farming lands and thus increasing the lack of vegetable products

Humanitarian operations

All humanitarian agencies and personnel have faced major constraints in providing humanitarian assistance. The prevailing insecurity is preventing safe access to people in need and essential facilities, such as warehouses. At least 23 humanitarian staff, including 11 health workers and 12 UNRWA employees have been killed since the start of hostilities. Operations have been also impeded by movement restrictions, the barring of imports, shortages of electricity, fuel, water and other essential materials. The distribution of assistance to IDPs who are not in UNRWA shelters is particularly complex

Despite these challenging conditions, humanitarian actors are working around the clock to support the most vulnerable. The major operation entails the hosting and caring of IDPs in UNRWA schools, and the support of those hosted in other facilities. Other interventions have included the distribution of food assistance to IDPs and emergency fuel to WASH facilities, the activation of psychosocial support helplines, and the launching of a mass media to raise awareness about the risk of unexploded ordnance (for further detail see Cluster Section below)

However, without a humanitarian pause, an opening of the crossings, and significant funding, the reach of operations will remain limited.

WEST BANK HUMANITARIAN OVERVIEW

Casualties

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli forces have continued for the sixth consecutive day. Since 7 October, 33 Palestinians, including five children, were killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; of those five were killed by settlers and 28 by Israeli forces.

A total of 500 Palestinian, including 81 children were injured by Israeli forces. Most of the injuries (426) were reported in various demonstrations in solidarity with residents of the Gaza Strip. Over 35 percent of all injuries were shot with live ammunition

Settler-related violence

Settler violence across the West Bank, especially in Palestinian communities near Israeli settlements, has been on the rise. Since 7 October, a total of 49 settler attacks against Palestinians resulting in casualties or property damage, including some where Israeli forces were involved, have been recorded. This represents an average of eight incidents per day, compared to a daily average of three incidents since the beginning of this year.

Yesterday at around 16:00, a group of armed Israeli settlers, reportedly from Esh Kodesh settlement outpost, subsequently supported by Israeli forces, raided Qusra village (Nablus), where they opened fire and threw stones at Palestinian homes; three Palestinians were killed by settlers and one by a soldier. The following day, a father and his son from the same community, were shot and killed by Israeli settlers while attending the funeral of the deceased.

Also yesterday, 35 Palestinian families comprising 214 people from Wadi as Seeq and Al Mu'arajat Bedouin communities (Ramallah), began to abandon their homes following systematic harassment and attacks by Israeli settlers, raising concern of a forcible transfer

Attacks on health care

Since 7 October, the World Health Organization (WHO) has documented 42 attacks in the West Bank, 28 attacks involving obstruction to delivery of health care, affecting 20 ambulances 20 involving physical violence towards health teams; eleven involving detention of health staff and ambulances; and seven involving militarized search of health assets.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS & RESPONSES

Protection

Priority Needs

- Psychological first aid (PFA) services, psychological counseling services and psychosocial/recreational/5,000 dignity kits.
- Need to increase documentation of violations of International Human Rights Law and Humanitarian Law.
- Supportive tools and devices such as crutches, wheelchairs, earphones, eyeglasses, etc., and medications for the elderly and people with disabilities.

Response to Date

- Child Protection (CP)/Mental Health Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) partners scaled up capacity of helplines and remote psychosocial support and referral to other services for children and their caregivers. This includes free remote (helpline, mobile, WhatsApp) PFA and psychosocial counseling.
- The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) has initiated an emergency mass media campaign through various platforms, including social media and radio stations, to send Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) and Conflict Preparedness and Protection (CPP) messages to as wide a population as possible.
- Providing family meeting services for children via conference calls. In the West Bank, the assigned MHPSS Focal Points for responding to settler violence triggers are continuing their MHPSS response as possible and the MHPSS Coordination Lead Focal Points at governorate levels are intervening as needed.

Shelter

Priority Needs

- Urgent need to provide services and basic Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI) to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
- Provision of shelter support in the form of NFIs and house maintenance for people displaced at urban centers and host families.
- Provision of shelter cash assistance for IDPs (reintegration package and belongings loss compensation) for at least 3,000 families.

Response to Date

- 270,000 IDPs are hosted at 102 UNRWA schools across Gaza Strip.
- ICRC/PRCS distributed 162 NFIs packs for displaced families in urban displacement settings, limited by movement restrictions.

Health

Priority Needs

- Addressing shortages of medical supplies impacting case management
- Fuel for hospitals and ambulances is on the verge of running out.
- Urgent need to restock medical supplies from external sources due to the severe depletion in the local market.

Response to Date

- Partners continue to procure supplies from the local market to support hospital operations.
- Surge staff remain present in the hospitals supporting case management
- Ambulances and emergency medical teams continue to operate despite the risk and difficult environment.

Food Security

Priority Needs

- Electricity, fuel and water sources in order to maintain internal food markets.
- Many shops now have supplies lasting less than a week, increasing urgency.
- Safe access to farms, livestock, fisheries and other food livelihood.
- Urgent import of fodder.

Response to Date

- WFP reached 175,486 displaced Gazans residing in UNRWA shelters with ready-to-eat fresh bread that WFP purchased from local bakeries.
- Initiating an assessment process to evaluate the effects of the escalation on urban female agripreneurs and family farmers.

Education

Priority Needs

- Safe access to schools and communities
- Lack of electricity makes it difficult to activate distance learning in Gaza

Response to Date

- Provision of school-based psychosocial support and recreational activities for at least 70,000 children and school staff as soon as the situation allows
- Emergency rehabilitation for at least 20 damaged schools, following a cluster rapid needs assessment.
- Provision of emergency supplies and learning kits to 10,000 children in DES and 50,000 children in schools once they reopen.
- Provision of catch-up classes, especially to displaced children (at least 20,000 child)

WASH

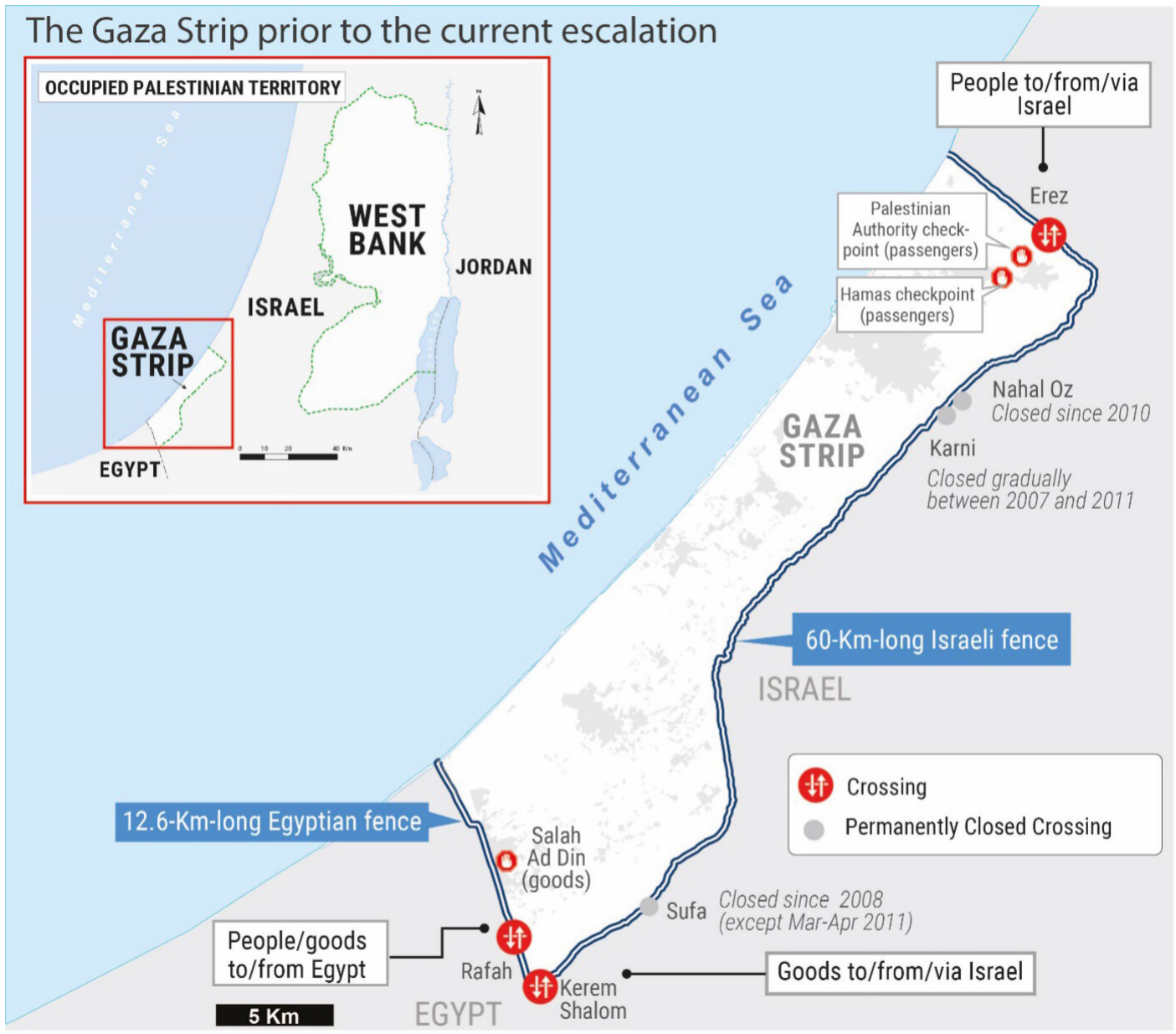
Priority Needs

- Immediate intervention is necessary to provide the population with clean drinking water, preventing an ongoing calamity that will persist even after the war concludes
- Urgent provision of an alternative power supply source and 20,000 liters/day of emergency fuel to sustain the operation of WASH facilities, along with replenishing the chlorine supply for water treatment plants.
- Immediate support required to restore disrupted municipal services, including solid waste management, water, and sanitation operations, as appealed by Gaza Strip municipalities.
- Urgent delivery of essential WASH services and provisions to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in collective centers, including drinking water and hygiene kits.

Response to Date

- 76,000 litres of fuel have been allocated for distribution among the WASH facilities that are experiencing power shortages.

Protection against sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA) remains a cross-cutting priority for all clusters. The SAWA helpline, reachable at 121 and through WhatsApp at +972 59-4040121 (East Jerusalem at 1-800-500-121), operates 24/7. This toll-free number is widely disseminated across all areas of intervention to report cases of SEA and to facilitate emergency counseling and referrals for affected communities to access life-saving services. The PSEA Network is monitoring calls daily and will increase the number of counselors if necessary


The Gaza Strip prior to the current escalation
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY
Mediterranean Sea
WEST BANK
JORDAN
ISRAEL
GAZA STRIP
EGYPT
Mediterranean Sea
People to/from/via Israel
Erez
Palestinian Authority check-point (passengers)
Hamas checkpoint (passengers)
Nahal Oz
Closed since 2010
Karni
Closed gradually between 2007 and 2011
GAZA STRIP
60-Km-long Israeli fence
ISRAEL
Crossing
Permanently Closed Crossing
12.6-Km-long Egyptian fence
Salah Ad Din (goods)
Sufa
Closed since 2008 (except Mar-Apr 2011)
People/goods to/from Egypt
Rafah
Kerem Shalom
Goods to/from/via Israel
5 Km
EGYPT

a